

WASHINGTON SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Rules Change

February 2002

Executive Summary

Background

The Higher Education Coordinating Board is responsible for administering the Washington Scholars program. Each year, the program honors a select group of high-achieving high school students who receive scholarships valued at the cost of tuition and fees, for four years, at each of the state's public colleges and an equivalent value if used at a private college within the state.

The Board invites the principals of all public and private high schools operating in Washington to submit student nominations representing the top one percent of their graduating senior class. Of the approximately 630 nominations that undergo screening by a committee of high school and college educators, three Washington Scholars and one Washington Scholars-Alternate residing in each of the state's 49 legislative districts are identified for recognition. The selection criteria include academic achievement, leadership, and community service.

The Washington Scholars are offered a state grant to help pay the costs of undergraduate coursework at a public or independent higher education institution in the state. The scholar must activate the grant beginning with the fall term immediately following high school graduation and remain continuously enrolled for one academic year. The award for scholars attending independent institutions is contingent upon a dollar-for-dollar match by the school to the state grant.

Alternates become eligible for a grant if one of the three scholars from the same legislative district elects to attend college outside the state, or otherwise relinquishes the grant within one calendar year of award.

Occasionally, the number of nominations received by the HECB is insufficient to award the full complement of scholars in each legislative district. The rules change permits the HECB to seek additional nominees whenever fewer than four nominations are received for a legislative district or whenever the Board expects it will receive fewer than four nominations.

Staff members filed the rules changes with the Washington State Code Reviser's Office Sept. 4, 2001, and held a public hearing Oct. 9, 2001. No public testimony was offered. The Board did, however, receive three written public comments in support of the rules change. Copies of these comments, along with a transcript of the public hearing and a copy of the proposed revised rules, are available upon request.

Recommendation

Staff recommends adoption of the proposed rules change.

RESOLUTION NO. 02-04

WHEREAS, The Higher Education Coordinating Board is directed by RCW 28B.80.245 to administer the Washington Scholars program; and

WHEREAS, The statute requires the Board to "...provide for the annual awarding of grants, if moneys are available, to three Washington scholars per legislative district; and, if not used by an original recipient, to the Washington scholars-alternate from the same legislative district;" and

WHEREAS, The recipients must physically reside in the district from which they are named as scholars; and

WHEREAS, Each high school nominates the top one percent of its senior class to develop the pool of eligible students from which the Washington Scholars are selected through a competitive process; and

WHEREAS, The distribution of high schools and students, at times, results in the nomination of fewer than four students per legislative district; and

WHEREAS, Staff have proposed a modification to WAC 250-66-030 that permits the Board to seek additional nominations from selected high schools to ensure that a sufficient pool of students exists to name three individuals as Washington Scholars and one individual as an alternate for every district in the state.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the proposed changes to WAC 250-66-030 be adopted and implemented for the nomination of scholars beginning with the class of 2002.

Approved:

February 6, 2002

Attest:

Bob Craves, Chair

Pat Stanford, Secretary